

MINUTES

Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group "Environment and Climate Change"

Date: 22 November 2017

Chair: Mr Jannes MAES, CEJA

Organisations present: All Organisations were present, except CAN Europe, CEMA, EBB, EFA, EISA, Pan Europe, IFAH-Europe, Eurocoop, Eurocommerce, EURAF, EOCC, Slowfood.

1. Approval of the agenda (and of the minutes of previous meeting¹)

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was non-public.

3. List of points discussed

1. Election of the Chair and Vice Chairs and plenary discussion: public consultation on how to make the food supply chain fairer

European Commission: We have two candidatures for Chair and two for Vice Chair. The candidatures are:

- Jannes Maes (CEJA) – Chair
- Martijn Buijsse (EISA) – Chair
- Faustine Bas-Defossez (EEB/BEE) – Vice Chair
- Martin Laengauer (Cogeca) – Vice Chair

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): I am the president of CEJA and a young farmer from Flanders. I have been chairing this CDG for the past year and hope to have the role for the coming year as well.

Martijn Buijsse (EISA): I am from the Netherlands and a farmer's son. I promote sustainable agriculture systems in Europe and represent EISA. Collaboration between farmers is important and communication to stakeholders is too. I have been active in sustainability for 10 years and

¹ If not adopted by written procedure (CIRCABC)

worked with farmers to develop better sustainable approaches. I want to make bridges. But to Mr Maes, I recognise your good work.

Martin Laengauer (Vice Chair/Cogeca): I represent the agri chamber of Austria and I am a member of the environmental working group of Copa-Cogeca. I work on environmental policy and law. I've belonged to this group for about 8 years and have been Vice Chair for 4 years.

Faustine Bas-Defossez (Vice Chair/EEB): The EEB is the largest federation of environmental NGOs and the first one to enter CDGs. I have been vice chairing the CDG on Environment and Climate Change for the past mandate and the CDG on Rural Development as well so I have quite a lot of experience. I very much hope that I can get your support for this round.

European Commission: We can vote in one of two ways: either by secret ballot or through raised hands. For a candidate to be elected they need a two thirds majority.

Niels Peter Noerring (Cogeca): Just a short comment. We have had some turbulent years, but at the moment, we have had some good meetings and I would urge everyone in the room to support the present Chair for the sake of continuity. As it has been the case until now we have had a Chair for two consecutive years. Thank you.

European Commission: By show of hands we have the results. Mr Maes, Mr Laengauer and Ms Bas-Defossez are elected.

Studies topic:

2. Study on the CAP - Helmholtz Centre Environmental Research – UFZ

- **Presentation by BirdLife, EEB and NABU**

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): Thank you all for the smooth election and congratulations to the Vice Chairs too. Now on to the next point on the agenda the presentation on the CAP by Mr Guy Pe'er.

Guy Pe'er: Thank you for inviting me. I would like to clarify that I am an independent scientist based in Leipzig. The work was commissioned by EEB, NABU and BirdLife. The report was developed by 23 authors. The CAP represents 60 billion euros a year invested in agriculture over 50% of the EU's terrestrial area. Many reforms have taken place and there have been new objectives as of 2010.

Why have we done this assessment? The negotiations are intense and difficult. It is the biggest policy arena of the EU. Consultations and workshops have taken place in the run up to 29 November and an impact assessment is to take place next spring. But there is a need for more informed decision making and fitness checks are some of the best ways of doing this. We had to compile the knowledge base and the CAP's impact on society, the economy and the environment, as well as assess whether or not it can deliver SDGs. There are also 6 fitness criteria that we examined. We aimed as much as possible at a direct evaluation of the CAP. Our report was published yesterday and I will move on to the outcomes.

The results for agri-environmental schemes show that they are well-designed but there is a low uptake and limited extent among other issues. Looking at greening, it has very limited, if no, effectiveness. There are broad exemptions and low requirements. Most Member States on

average have a higher diversity level than the EU requirement so the EU level is too low. Looking at patterns of biodiversity decline, they are slower in some Member States than others. The results for climate are quite clear as well. They were declining for years until 2005, but now agri emissions are on the rise again. Overall, the situation for climate is that if there are no dedicated instruments to tackle climate change it won't be successful. There is a growing market in terms of organic farming. There is a larger share of the budget for intensification of farming. The unfortunate news is that the CAP reform of 2013 has affected the more effective agri-environmental measures. Regulation can achieve minimum standards with lower costs. Internal coherence is also low. There is some complementarity among instruments, though. In general there are conflicting objectives and instruments. There is potential for bottom-up integration, but this sometimes conflicts with conservation policies. Monitoring is not sufficient and public interests are not met by budgets.

The key lessons I would like to bring from the environmental side are the following:

- there are many socio-economic factors affecting rural areas, but the CAP offers very little contribution and support for land-use changes, farm structures and management; and
- administrative burdens are a problem that limits success.

In terms of effectiveness, it is a mixed overall result. The direct payments as the biggest share of the CAP do support incomes, decoupling helped in improving productivity and has been shown to reduce technical efficiency. Currently, prices are following global markets, but this opening of the markets exposes the farmers to higher price volatility. The end of production quotas is also something to be addressed. In terms of efficiency, we are asking whether the CAP is dividing the distribution of payments according to need. There is no clear indication of objective which causes inefficiency because we cannot evaluate what is done. In terms of coherence, the addition of new objectives only creates more vagueness. There are a multitude of instruments sometimes in direct conflict with others such as the intervention in the milk market and the buying of excess milk. Looking at the EU's external global effects by importing feed for EU livestock production, for example, the EU exports its environmental footprint. In terms of relevance, the CAP objectives are vague and largely outdated, public acceptance has also been eroded, and consultations do not replace the regular policy process. There is basically no meeting between the budget and the interests of all members of society.

Key conclusions from the socio-economic part include:

- reforms having resolved most market and development problems;
- there is no consistent, well-justified set of objectives;
- indicators and evaluation of the CAP are still weak;
- in some regions the CAP has a social responsibility;
- some emerging economies gained from market access;
- the CAP fails in reducing the global ecological footprint; and
- it lacks coherent policy packages and incentives for policy integration.

In terms of SDGs, sustainability needs to be looked at in the broader sense and on a global level. SDGs 1 and 2 are no poverty and zero hunger. The CAP does subsidise poorer Member States.

On the other hand, there are major hindrances such as low accessibility of payments. All in all, the result is positive in terms of the CAP but only to a certain extent. In terms of SDG 8 which is decent work and economic growth, there are some positive aspects. The CAP has contributed to reductions in unemployment, but there is a major problem with generational renewal in farming and vitality. Looking at SDG 10 on reduced inequalities the result is again mixed. SDG 3 on good health and wellbeing is a mixed bag again and SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production is not supported by the CAP overall. Sustainability along its social, economic and environmental dimensions has not been achieved and will not be under the CAP as it is. We need a modern, simpler, smarter CAP.

European Commission: The study is comprehensive, it contains several judgments, argumentations and provocative considerations, which is good to warm up the discussion in this group, but it contains few objective data and analyses. One issue was that the CAP does not make systematic evaluations and assessments before reforms. We have an obligation to evaluate policies and the ones we carry out are very comprehensive and thorough, always publicly available. Impact assessments are also always carried out before any policy proposal. The Refit is done to assess a policy. As the impact assessment starts always with an assessment of the policy and of the present and future context, the Refit can be considered redundant as regards an impact assessment.

I would like to hear about the two indicators on the biodiversity chart and about the correlation with agriculture and policy. On slide 12, you attribute the slight increase in greenhouse gas emissions to coupled payments and animals. However, the statistics show that animals have decreased, but we should see the whole picture of the graph. On the following page you present organic farming and you say there is no support while a large support is provided for animal production; that is unsustainable. I would like to hear what kind of support you are referring to because direct payments are mostly decoupled and there is practically no support for meat production. It is to be considered also that organic farming is largely supported under rural development.

On slide 13 you refer to a figure related to aid per hectare for ecological focus areas. This figure strikes me as it seems very high as compared to the average direct payment per hectare. You may explain how it has been calculated. .

On slide 14, it is not clear in the table if you have reported everything and if you can explain the link between effective greening and agri-environmental measures taking the quality of delivery into account.

Guy Pe'er: Thank you for your concrete comments. I will try to be brief. The presentation is not the full report. These results are only a few of what we found. I will start with the fact that we differentiate between land-use changes partly dependent on the CAP. We do not claim there is a direct causality between policy and GHGs and biodiversity. In fact there is no correlation and causality link. The calculations are simple. We are looking at the reality. The correlation between budget and effectiveness comes out the same. On the calculations of payments per area, these are exemplary payments.

European Commission: Thank you for your explanation. It is important to use numbers with a certain degree of honesty, but here we cannot arrive at this level. The way the payment of Greening is attributed to ecological focus area is incorrect and biased. The comparison also between greening and AECM, given the different objectives is inappropriate and these numbers cannot be used in this context.

Niels Peter Noerring (Cogeca): The Commission and Member States must have failed with the CAP if we look at your results. Firstly, I think we should note that the CAP has changed from focussing only on production. Today it looks at multiple objectives. We should try and improve it, though. In Pillar I, the greening component has been focussed on and the Commission wants more real greening. Another thing is problems for the farmers. They fear going green because if they don't reach objectives they won't receive the full support. In Pillar II there is one big problem: there is only payment for the cost and this is a risk for the farmer. We must have more focus on SDGs and EU objectives, and focus on methods with multiple effects. The objectives must make sense for specific regions and farmers and there isn't just one solution but multiple ones. If we want to achieve this there must be good results and we must involve farmers and other stakeholders in discussions. There's therefore a lot to do in the future. This CDG should inspire the Commission to come up with a better CAP from 2020.

Luis Bulhao Martins (C.E.P.M.): We consider this survey is well done but seems to have a narrow focus. In my view, a fundamental aspect not reflected is that we need to maintain agriculture in rural areas. It's better to have farmers than not to have them. There are some who do a good job, some who don't. We need to help the latter to improve their results. The CAP represents a strong instrument of pressure throughout Europe. We need tools for unity and for that reason we need to avoid destroying the two pillars. In my own sector (corn), we have made tremendous progress in precision agriculture. Another factor is that the environment is a global problem. Protecting it in Europe means we cannot harm the environment elsewhere. We also need to look at progress and better behaviour from an environmental standpoint. The CAP has continually lost budget resources and we must bear that in mind.

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): On slide 26, am I correct in assuming that according to these numbers civil society is in favour of an increase in the CAP budget?

Guy Pe'er: The simplest answer is that those asked could choose three options. I will reply to the C.E.P.M. colleague. We do need farmers and agricultural areas need to be used. I'm not against greening, I do believe it can be improved without changing the CAP completely. If one wants to develop a sustainability package, I believe it must take into consideration acceptance and efficiency from the public. I am not in favour or against the CAP. Our outcomes are negative. It hasn't been a great success in all of its objectives. We have been forced into over-simplification in the presentation and executive summary. Some technical issues must be addressed. On slide 13, I welcome recalculations. Greening and EFAs are different in terms of their objectives so we look only into the biodiversity component here. In terms of looking at specific countries, we have looked at single results at Member State level and there have been both positive and negative results. I hope that the 38% budget can be defended. I think the CAP is an important policy. Risks are increasing with climate change and environmental degradation. Coupling insurance with methods to prevent erosion could be successful.

Evangelos Koumentakos (Copa): I get the impression that this is an overarching approach that risks being a "whatever" approach. It seems to me that you criticised direct payments and trade, and supported productivity. How can this be? When we produce and know that we are more efficient, we are actually doing good by enhancing food production and security while exporting high standards. Regarding poor knowledge uptake, even from such an angle we believe there is a positive point in relation to the CAP, such as the EIP AGRI-minded approach with a strong share of knowledge and uptake of those practices. On the one hand, we talk of global issues and then reduce our position by saying we should not have open borders and trade. I didn't understand the milk example. There are other factors too, including political ones such as the Russian embargo that were not taken into consideration.

Guy Pe'er: In terms of production, productivity and technical efficiency, we could not evaluate what couldn't be evaluated based on evidence so our results are non-conclusive. We don't praise productivity or trade, we simply look at them. The question is how you make sure production is viable and here the issue is sustainability. The overarching approach you say is "whatever". Our contributions were made by people from many countries. This would be the moment to invite further dialogue on this. If something is missing please inform us. There is a need for more inclusion of farmers. Scientists should be invited as stakeholders to CDGs as well.

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): With that we end this point on the agenda and introduce Julie Raynal for the next presentation.

Presentations topics:

3. Green Infrastructure: state of play, timeline, clarification.

- **Julie Raynal**

Julie Raynal: The EU 2020 biodiversity strategy has 6 targets with specific, partly time-bound measures. Target 2 calls to maintain and restore ecosystems. Knowledge needs to be improved, restore at least 15% of degraded ecosystems and establish and promote further green infrastructure within the EU. To address this call the EU adopted a strategy on Green Infrastructure.

The EU GI strategy (2013) is made up of 4 elements. Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services. This is a services-oriented definition and aimed at maximising the delivery of ecosystem services, contributing to nature and to people (clean air, water, recreational areas). With a view to implementing the strategy, we have to promote GI through the EU's main policy areas (for example urban GI). There are also projects aimed at testing the methodologies we have put forward. We can also promote GI through the CAP.

In terms of supporting EU-level GI projects, we have an Action Plan for nature, people and the economy COM (2017) with 4 main priorities of action. Action 12 provides guidance to support the deployment of GI for better connectivity of the N2000 network. It asks the Commission to put out guidance for further supporting EU-level GI projects. There is also a need to improve information and promote innovation aimed at improving the knowledge of ecosystems and their services in the EU. The GI strategy also calls for an improvement of innovation through technical standards.

Martin Laengauer (Vice Chair/Cogeca): I would like to express my gratitude for this very coherent presentation and thanks that the efforts have borne fruit for green infrastructure. Nationally and at Copa-Cogeca, it seems the flow of information in Member States is lacking. Please make sure agriculture and forestry is included from the beginning in discussions. We have a great need for space and the assumption here is that more land will be placed under protection. If a similar regime to Natura 2000 is being applied here that's going to mean there are going to be strict guidelines and the realisation of projects (such as construction on green areas) will be limited. There are a number of open questions here and I'm asking for open and transparent discussion.

Yanka Kazakova (EFNCP): What are the requirements for Member States in terms of the action plan for GI?

Evangelos Koumentakos (Copa): I would like to echo what has been said by Martin Laengauer. But also add that sometimes in policy we have trade-offs. In mountain ranges one of the only activities that can be held there is livestock farming and we are pushed to protect animals from wolves for example, while on the other hand I see here a discussion on leaving them to move freely. I don't understand how farmers can have an activity there and contribute to rural economies under these conditions. In terms of economically important targets, which are the non-important ones?

Niels Peter Noerring (Cogeca): Green and blue infrastructure are very important. We here are looking upon a wide range of environmental and natural objectives at the same time. We have not really had much focus on this or been aware of how GI works in Member States and it would therefore be useful if the Commission could lift this point further up on their agenda. Better communication between relevant directors in the Commission on this issue could be useful.

Julie Raynal: Thank you. It is important to clarify what GI is. It is just another paradigm of thinking promoting the sustainable management of ecosystems. It's putting in place intelligent strategic management and another way of considering the benefits that nature can provide you. The aim is to have an output-oriented approach.

We are also very transparent in implementing this strategy. We have a working group set up gathering all relevant stakeholders to foster the better implementation of the GI strategy. This kind of meeting is also a step in the right direction, but of course it's not sufficient and we are currently reviewing this. We need to improve our efforts to further disseminate what GI is.

On the question of the nature of the action plan, a lot of dialogue has already been had. The Commission will travel to Member States to discuss every aspect of the action plan. The first concrete step will be for the Commission to put forward this guidance.

In terms of trade-offs, it's not a black and white planet. Sometimes situations may require specific analysis. The Commission has instilled a platform for this (on large carnivores). But again, it's a constant dialogue between national authorities and those at EU level. Sometimes there can be implementation issues which need to be addressed.

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): Thank you and on to the next point.

4. How smart farming can improve environmental and climatic performance of the farming sector?

- **Copa-Cogeca**

Liisa Pietola (Cogeca): I am the Chair of the working party on the environment at Copa-Cogeca. On smart farming, I have three key words: productivity, resilience, profitability. We need to have income to apply modern technology. The start is soil and root welfare: we need to pay attention to appropriate seedbed to reach an even growing stand, surrounded by other vegetation types to improve biodiversity.

One big question for farmers is what to do with land after the harvest? Should they plough or not? Can we still sow a winter crop or wait until spring? If we could influence the weather

conditions the answers would be easier. This suggests smart farming is a very complex issue. Development is constant, like the challenges. The human factor is catalyst to real-world decision-making. We need to figure out how we apply different resources and understand the natural phenomena.

Climate challenges are global, but we need to act locally. The potential of smart farming means that we must increase efficiency and improve emissions intensities. This is also relative to yield gaps. Of course, these technologies should be affordable and we need to make this visible in our national registries of greenhouse gases. Remote sensing must be in tandem with farmers on the ground. We need to understand how modern we are, but also remember and respect nature's systems such as photosynthesis. In order for carbon sequestration to occur in soil plants need all their nutrients, and if one nutrient is deprived there will be no balance, less absorption and more leakage risk will occur. Nature acts slowly and we must understand that. I do hope that we will continue to have long-term experiments and monitoring and the patience to wait for nature's reaction.

We have to follow a path towards a low-carbon future, but this is different from other economic sectors, also because we are the only sectors that remove emissions from the atmosphere in soils and vegetation. The farmers must be the key players and at the heart of all of this transformation because they are knowledgeable. There must be good agreements on how data generated by agricultural activity is used. All farmers are subject to risks and there must be synergies addressing productivity and a number of climate/market risks. Cooperation is crucial, as is less bureaucracy and harmonised methodology. We must have recognition of voluntary environmental schemes and farmers need help, trust and support.

Eberhard Hartelt (Copa): I would like to say that unfortunately I wasn't at AGRITECHNICA but an identification system for specific weeds was presented there ensuring plant protection products can be delivered more specifically. We can be selective and targeted in their application. This will need a pre-condition for it to happen. The big "but" is that this technology is very expensive and therefore limited to certain farms. It's important that support is available at the political level. Sharing between farmers can lead to further cooperation. There will need to be infrastructure in place. We need comprehensive broadband and mobile networks. If we get up to speed with the technology it will work. Modern technology can make a huge contribution to the environment.

Diane Mitchell (Copa): Data is important. We need to understand where our baselines are and where we're going to. In terms of knowledge and information, we're keen on fostering relationships between farmers and researchers. Quite often we have lots of information in different places but it needs to be implemented.

Matthias Meissner (WWF): Did I understand correctly that in Copa-Cogeca you're asking for innovative leaps to be paid for by society? What is the goal? Why would it be up to them to make the investment? I get the impression that what we're talking about is efficiency above all. The impression I have is that the main focus is income generation, so why should the state pay?

Eberhard Hartelt (Copa): Irrespective of the farming method, in all countries there is investment in farming. In this case the rapid implementation of modern technology demonstrates a presence of competitiveness. People will only come into this profession because they are fascinated by working in nature and fascinated by the technological side of farming which leads to efficiency and income. If it's in the general interest it should be fostered.

Faustine Bas-Defossez (Vice Chair/EEB): If there are high returns on investments, why should society pay? The presentation was focussed on CO₂, but farming activities emit methane and nitrous oxide. My question is: what are your solutions in terms of smart farming when it comes to livestock?

Liisa Pietola (Cogeca): The better the soil is doing, the less nitrous oxide will be emitted. If we apply manure in smart ways, we will reduce emissions. In terms of methane, of course animal welfare and nutrition play a part. If we improve the production of animal feeds, better yields, costs and research-efficient results should be seen. We need to show the productivity for a given farm, producing the cow feed while improving carbon removals. Today, the removals of emissions from animal feed are not accounted for, but animal emissions are.

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): There are also technological developments being carried out in pure manure-based digestives and the methane is transformed into electricity. We see sensor technology gives us the chance to examine how a cow digests its food and how much methane is produced. To Mr Meissner, we have all seen developments in renewable energy have benefits for the environment and to those buying the technologies. I don't see the problem in helping to move our agricultural sector forward.

Martijn Buijsse (EISA): I would like to respond as well on this last aspect. The planning aspect is important. Moving into smart farming is a long journey. Politically and policy-wise, if you see farmers taking the initiative to move forward it must be recognised. To Mr Meissner, I agree that society wants results, but what is a good measurement of performance?

Matthias Meissner (WWF): It's been said that technology is good and helps us to work more efficiently. Nonetheless, we must look at the consequences of new technologies. We don't reject them, but there are also negative impacts such as further intensification. We in the environmental movement are not always 100% behind them. In terms of measuring impact, we need to look at rural communities.

Giuseppe Luca Capodieci (FEFANA): On Ms Bas-Defossez's comment about livestock, there is huge potential through smart farming to examine the relationship between a smart feeding practice and lowering emissions of nitrogen and phosphorous. There are solutions and we are trying to use them to maximise efficiency.

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): To Mr Meissner, let's think of a scenario 20 years in the future. Today I have small fields with GI. I can imagine a future in which instead of three tractors I use drones so GI won't be a problem. Technology can help us improve efficiency and biodiversity, too. I am therefore fairly optimistic, but I agree that there isn't always a success story so society must play its part because farmers cannot shoulder all of this investment risk alone.

Evangelos Koumentakos (Copa): Technology and data generation are huge questions and we have seen things are different across the Atlantic, because of different agriculture and data management. At Copa-Cogeca we've worked on drones and data sharing positions. On smart farming, efficiency is a key word because implementation on a wider scale is easier when the actions make economic sense also. There are numerous collateral effects.

Rudback Lennart Goran (ECVC): I'm not very impressed with smart farming. Farming used to be about handling complexities. Smart farming makes farmers more stupid. Emissions change from year to year and affect the climate.

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): On that note we will break for lunch.

[Lunch Break]

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): Good afternoon, without any further ado let's move on to our next presentation.

5. Water and Agriculture: follow up actions to the staff working document published this year

- **European Commission**

European Commission: The staff working document was the fruit of inter-service cooperation. The idea was to assess the status of water in agriculture. It was published on 28 April 2017 and assesses the status of water in agriculture.

The staff working document shows that the status of water in agriculture has improved, but more needs to be done. The EU legislative framework in place is so far sufficient, but a lot is to be done to improve its implementation. In order to try to improve this, the document identified 4 main areas: implementation, governance, technology and innovation, finance. The authorities dealing with water and agriculture should work together. The Commissioners Hogan and Vella addressed the Agriculture Council in May showing the way for cooperation. It has also been followed by meetings between agricultural and environment authorities.

We began the dissemination of best practices and we are trying to put together a portfolio of potential projects to be financed through existing funds or with the help of new financial instruments. We had an environmental implementation review that identified the main gaps in national implementations and tried to find solutions together. We have also cooperated on the priorities of the Horizon 2020 initiatives.

Finally, in terms of a knowledge hub, the aim would be to promote knowledge and examine what the situation is now and look at what it will be in future and find solutions.

Faustine Bas-Defossez (Vice Chair/EEB): Is water evaluation part of the fitness check and how will this feed in to the future CAP?

European Commission: The document has found that the EU legislative framework in place is so far sufficient and focus should be put more on its implementation. What is missing is in particular on implementation of the policies. The first step is to try to persuade member states to implement better what is already there. On the water framework directive, it is one of the sets of evaluations that we are launching. An evaluation of the water and CAP is in the pipeline as well..

Niels Peter Noerring (Cogeca): With this working document, we got a good overview but I would like to hear about the procedure of producing it. Has there been a consultation procedure of a draft working paper? I fear that they don't go through a quality check.

European Commission: As it is a staff working document, we don't consult Member States individually because time doesn't allow for it, but the document has been presented in two meetings with national authorities for agriculture and environment and no one has signalled any problems or mistakes.

Maria Rosa Mosquera-Losada (EURAF): A couple of questions: what is your opinion of the link between CAP activities that improve water quality and the fulfilment of water policy? I

would also like to ask you if there is a possibility of linking all documents and activities related to water improvement in one place?

European Commission: All activities are interrelated. On the link between the CAP and the implementation of the water directive, we need a more thorough assessment. An evaluation is in the pipeline. What is clear is that several Member States don't take sufficiently advantage of their rural development funds. In terms of cross compliance, you know how it operates. Another possibility is to strengthen the farm advisory system for water.

Evangelos Koumentakos (Copa): In terms of the quantity of water and draining issues that can improve farming practices, could we link that to considerations on climate change? Improvement could have a knock-on effect also with emissions.

Diane Mitchell (Copa): In terms of the knowledge hub, is it aimed at Member States or other users?

European Commission: Yes, it is targeted to authorities. We intend to provide knowledge and information at all levels so that a single repository can provide them the current and future situation of their water status. . This is also useful for farming communities.

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): If there are no other comments we will move on to the next point on the agenda.

Informative topic:

6. Clean Air Forum: main outcomes of the event in Paris

- **Roald Wolters**

Roald Wolters: The Clean Air Forum is meant to provide coordinated implementation and guidance of the legislation on air pollution and air quality. There are 400,000 premature deaths a year due to air pollution in the EU. 1 out of 12 EU citizens is exposed particulate matter above EU limit values.

The Clean Air Forum is meant to support Member States and stakeholders in discussing key cross-cutting topics. We focussed on health aspects, air quality in cities, agriculture and air quality, clean air business opportunities and governance. There were over 350 participants. All in all, there was a very broad consensus that we need to do more to tackle air pollution.

The reason for having a designated session on agriculture is that NH₃ affects human health by forming secondary particulate matter, which has also a big impact in cities. It is also detrimental to ecosystems. We should find a sustainable way to feed a growing population. The Clean Air Forum focus session on agriculture had a range of different panellists, from government, science, the agricultural sector and ngo's. In the long run, the effects of reducing ammonia emissions will also be beneficial from an economic perspective. There is a will in the agriculture community to take measures, but it can be difficult for them to do it on their own. The agricultural community has public goods it has to take care of. We need to have a way to ensure farmers can take on these measures without losing their competitiveness. We made a brochure highlighting the most cost-effective measures the agricultural sector can take.

Liisa Pietola (Cogeca): Of course we need to improve air quality. Positive aspects of ammonia are that it contains nitrogen and it is used as an essential plant nutrient. Secondly, ammonia will build organic aerosols with gas-emitting trees that will have together a cooling effect and combat the negative impacts of climate change. Are you aware of these studies on aerosols? Why are you not taking into account the positive aspects of ammonia, and the role of forests to clean the air?

Roald Wolters: We did take the studies into account, but considered it much more important to reduce ammonia emissions to improve people's health than to accept 400.000 premature deaths in order to remain its small cooling effect. Less ammonia means you can still have enough nutrients for your crops. If you utilise fertiliser or manure in the right way, you keep all the nutrients for the crops and this is beneficial for farmers.

Faustine Bas-Defossez (Vice Chair/EEB): On the follow-up to the Forum, are there any other concrete actions such as a joint document addressing ammonia emissions? And when will the next Clean Air Forum take place?

Roald Wolters: In terms of the follow-up, we will not provide a concrete action document as such. The aim of the forum was to bring stakeholders together and establish what is needed. In terms of communication with DG AGRI, we need to disseminate further information about funding. The next Clean Air Forum is in two years.

Maria Rosa Mosquera-Losada (EURAF): I didn't see the role of agroforestry in reducing ammonia being mentioned and I think that it should be taken into account.

Roald Wolters: We presented some options and they are already used quite substantially, but this isn't an exhaustive list. All options that will lead to a reduction of ammonia emissions can be discussed and used.

Evangelos Koumentakos (Copa): It is positive to see a more realistic approach being taken by involving different stakeholders and establishing who can do what. We are here discussing agriculture, but energy and transport should also be taken into account. In particular, we understand that the Commission has no competency in social policy and energy poverty, but the residential sector is a huge part of the discussion with a good story for the available solutions and it is not mentioned at all in the discussions, nor was it during the Forum.

Roald Wolters: Transport has been discussed in terms of air pollution for quite some time, while agriculture is relatively new in the public debate. Yes, agriculture also plays a role. We see a reason to look at the agricultural sector to increase awareness but it's not the only one we look at. In all our measures and calculations domestic measures are taken into account.

Evangelos Koumentakos (Copa): My reaction was based on the fact that there was no session on these issues and still the message is not there. I'm not expecting legislation, but a video is not enough.

Roald Wolters: We had to make choices on what topics to discuss and we chose what we deemed to be most relevant, but it doesn't mean it's not on the radar. Besides, discussions on problems with domestic heating as well as solutions have been discussed during, especially during the session on business solutions.

Nicola Pisano (SACAR): It seemed you really focussed on production, but it would have been good to focus specifically on each actor in the supply chain as well.

Roald Wolters: It's a fair point. Every actor in the process plays a role and it's definitely something to be taken into account.

Martijn Buijsse (EISA): During the Forum, were the effects of nitrogen binding crops considered? I am interested how this was discussed as an opportunity.

Roald Wolters: We wanted to discuss how to make solutions work, not the actual solutions. Crop rotation and the use of different crops are definitely useful.

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): Am I correct in saying we look at these effects more from the perspective of people living in cities?

Roald Wolters: We look at everyone's health. We focus more on cities because most people live in cities. If you reduce emissions, the effects will be felt Europe-wide, not only in cities.

Liisa Pietola (Cogeca): When you showed the map on the spread of ammonia, I still thought of the role of forests. Could you elaborate on the role of forests more?

Roald Wolters: Countries with more forests might have less agriculture, therefore emissions are lower.

European Commission: Just to say, it can be studied, but the aim is to prevent ammonia going into the atmosphere. The presence or not of forests is not an issue here. The main point is prevention.

Evangelos Koumentakos (Copa): If you look at the targets, Finland, for example, has the highest ones. We need to improve the assessment of the sources.

Roald Wolters: I don't see any reason to further assess the sources; this has recently been done already for the negotiations on the review of the Directive on National Emission Ceilings (NEC). Agriculture emits almost 95% of all ammonia and if you want to reduce ammonia emissions you have to look to agriculture.

Maria Rosa Mosquera-Losada (EURAF): It's true that having forests and trees can affect the air quality, but the first issue should be avoiding emissions.

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): My point before was to highlight that the biggest impact of ammonia emissions was not in the immediate rural area. Am I correct in saying that air quality in the near surroundings cannot be used as an argument to stop building a new stable for example?

Roald Wolters: The effect is bigger when further from the source, indeed. It will be less of a problem at farm level.

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): So on to the next point on the agenda.

7. COP23 feedback and discussions

- **Herwig Ranner**

Herwig Ranner: In terms of implementing the Paris Agreement, there were discussions on transparency rules, a 5-yearly ambition cycle, a multilateral climate regime and the Global Climate Action Agenda. In terms of land sector issues and forestry, no outcome was reached but we hope for a better one in future. In terms of the agriculture sector, we could agree on a

decision, which has a 3-year period of activity. We still have to agree on how exactly we will carry it out.

In the end, we agreed to focus on what we had to do under the convention's mandate. It also covers a range of issues that can be looked at immediately. It was a positive signal to the rest of the discussions that parties could agree on it. Looking at the elements on the COP decision on agriculture, the aim is to produce scientific and technological recommendations through submissions, workshops and expert meetings, for example. We also had a useful intervention from farmers' organisations saying they were willing to start working and that we give them something concrete. There are a number of EU priorities going forward.

Evangelos Koumentakos (Copa): How do you see adaptation and mitigation playing out?

Herwig Ranner: The text talks about assessment and there will be a scientific discussion on this. Virtually all relevant parties have agriculture in their NDCs, so we hope there will always be a balance. Even in developing countries they were talking about mitigation.

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): Thank you for the presentations. This concludes all but the last point.

8. AOB

Maria Rosa Mosquera-Losada (EURAF): On 29 November in the European Parliament next week there will be a presentation on agroforestry.

Martijn Buijsse (EISA): I would like to come back to the start of the meeting on the election of the Chair. There seems to be unwritten acceptance that it's a two-year term. Maybe for future CDGs, this could be made clearer for everyone in order to avoid misleading proceedings.

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): Are there any other ideas for the subject for the next CDG?

Evangelos Koumentakos (Copa): An idea could be to look at the EU project 'you are pruning'.

Maria Rosa Mosquera-Losada (EURAF): The agroforestry project results could be presented.

Jannes Maes (Chair/CEJA): Thank you to the interpreters, the secretariat and the Vice Chairs. The meeting is closed.

[CLOSE OF MEETING]

4. Next steps

Issues to be discussed in future meetings:

- look at the 'you are pruning' project
- presentation of agroforestry project results and discussion on how Agroforestry can boost the revenues and resilience of Europe's farmers

5. Next meeting

6. List of participants - Annex

Disclaimer

"The opinions expressed in this report represent the point of view of the meeting participants from agriculturally related NGOs at community level. These opinions cannot, under any circumstances, be attributed to the European Commission. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use which might be made of the here above information."

List of participants– Minutes

Civil Dialogue Group " Environment and Climate Change "

Date: 22 Novembre 2017

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